02290

1968/11/03

~~SECRET~~ SENSITIVE

10:28 AM EST Sunday 3 Nov 68

Received LBJ Ranch CommCen:
11:40 AM CST Sunday 3 Nov 68

39

EYES ONLY

EEA669
OO WTE10
DE WTE 4194

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP82658

~~S E C R E T~~ SENSITIVE EYES ONLY

THIS ALL RIGHT

Gave Bud Wells

NOVEMBER 3, 1968

IF YOU APPROVE, I WILL CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING PROPOSED BACK CHANNEL WITH CLIFFORD, KATZENBACH AND WHEELER.

QUOTE FOR BUNKER AND ABRAMS FROM THE PRESIDENT.

" FROM HERE IT LOOKS AS IF IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR ABE TO CALL IN THE SENIOR US AND ARVN MILITARY COMMANDERS TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- I'VE PERSONALLY TALKED WITH THE PRESIDENT AND WANT TO PASS DIRECTLY TO YOU HOW HE VIEWS THE SITUATION.

-- HE IS NOT GOING TO SELL OUT WHAT WE -- THE US, ARVN AND OTHER ALLIES -- HAVE WON ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

-- HE WILL NOT RECOGNIZE THE NLF AS AN INDEPENDENT ENTITY.

-- HE WILL HAVE NO PART OF IMPOSING A COALITION GOVERNMENT ON THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE.

-- HE WILL LIVE BY THE HONOLULU COMMUNIQUE WHICH PROMISES A LEADING ROLE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS TO THE GVN.

-- YOU AND I KNOW THAT MILITARILY WE'VE GOT A GOOD DEAL: (A) DURING THE BAD WEATHER OVER THE NVN PANHANDLE THE BOMBING HALT DOESN'T HURT US; WE'RE GOING TO PUT A MAXIMUM EFFORT OVER LAOS; (B) ENEMY OBSERVANCE OF THE DMZ IS A NET MILITARY ADVANTAGE TO US; (C) OUR JOB IS EASIER IF CITIES LIKE SAIGON AND DANANG ARE FREE FROM ATTACK.

-- SO, AS SOLDIERS, LET US GO ON ABOUT OUR OWN JOB WHILE THE DIPLOMATS TRY TO DO THEIRS-- IN CONFIDENCE THAT OUR STRONG MILITARY POSITION WON'T BE THROWN AWAY AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE-- WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT EARLY DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS DEPENDS ON OUR KEEPING MAXIMIM MILITARY PRESSURE ON THE BATTLEFIELDS."

YOU, IN SAIGON, OF COURSE, MUST BE THE JUDGE OF WHETHER SUCH AN APPROACH WOULD BE HELPFUL. END QUOTE

DTG 031628Z NOV 1968

~~SECRET~~ SENSITIVE EYES ONLY

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NLJ [redacted]
By [redacted] NARA, Date [redacted]